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HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE ON THE REVIEW OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
Eighth session
New York, 25-28 May 1993

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Mahamane Maiga (Mali)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with recommendation 37 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, 1/ as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978, a high-level meeting of all States participating in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was convened at Geneva from 26 May to 2 June 1980 to carry out an overall, intergovernmental review of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) within the United Nations development system. The report of the first session of the intergovernmental body 2/ was considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. In its resolution 35/202 of 16 December 1980, the General Assembly decided, inter alia, to change the name of the high-level meeting to High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and requested the Administrator of UNDP to convene the next session of the Committee under the same organizational and procedural arrangements as had been made for the high-level meeting.

2. The second session of the High-level Committee met in New York from 1 to 8 June 1981 and its report 3/ was considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session. In accordance with the agreement reached at the Committee's second session and endorsed by the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session, the structure of the third session of the High-level Committee consisted of the Committee in plenary meeting and only one working group, and this practice has been followed in subsequent sessions.

3. The third session of the High-level Committee met in New York from 31 May to 6 June 1983 and its report 4/ was considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session.

4. The fourth session was held in New York from 28 May to 3 June 1985. Its report 5/ was considered by the General Assembly at its fortieth session.

5. The fifth session was held in New York from 18 to 22 May 1987 and its report 6/ was adopted on 27 May 1987. The General Assembly considered that report at its forty-second session.

6. The sixth session was held in New York from 18 to 22 September 1989 and its report 7/ adopted on 29 September 1989. The General Assembly reviewed that report at its forty-fourth session.

7. The seventh session was held in New York from 28 to 31 May 1991 and its report 8/ was adopted on 6 June 1991. The General Assembly considered that report at its forty-sixth session.

II. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Date and place of the session

8. The eighth session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries was held in New York from 25 to 28 May 1993. The High-level Committee held a further meeting on 4 June 1993 to consider the adoption of its report.

9. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/202, the session was convened by the Administrator of UNDP under the usual procedural arrangements.

B. Attendance

10. The following States Members of the United Nations participating in UNDP were represented at the session:

Albania
Algeria
Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Armenia
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belarus
Belize
Benin
Bhutan
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Canada
Chad
Chile
China
Colombia
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Cuba
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Djibouti
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Estonia
Ethiopia
Finland
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Grenada
Guatemala
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Latvia
Lesotho
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Lithuania
Madagascar
Malawi
Malaysia
Mali
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
Netherlands
Nicaragua
Niger
Nigeria
Norway
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Republic of Korea
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Senegal
Slovakia
Sri Lanka
Suriname
Swaziland
Sweden
Tajikistan
Thailand
Tunisia
Turkey

Turkmenistan
Uganda
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
Uruguay
Uzbekistan
Venezuela
Viet Nam
Zambia
Zimbabwe

11. In addition, representatives of the Observer Missions of Palestine and Switzerland to the United Nations, which are also participating in the work of UNDP, took part in the discussions of the Committee.

12. Members of the following offices and departments of the United Nations Secretariat participated in the proceedings of the session:

Department for Economic and Social Development

Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development

United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services

Regional Commissions New York Liaison Office

13. The following regional commissions were represented:

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

14. The following United Nations bodies were also represented:

INSTRAW

United Nations Population Fund

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat)

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office

15. Representatives of the following specialized agencies and related organizations attended the session:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

World Health Organization

WHO/Pan-American Health Organization

World Bank

International Monetary Fund

World Meteorological Organization

International Maritime Organization

World Intellectual Property Organization

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

International Telecommunication Union

16. The following intergovernmental organizations, which have received a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly, were represented at the session.

(To be inserted)

17. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended the session as observers:

(To be inserted)

18. As proposed by the Administrator of UNDP in his report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session (A/34/415, para. 7), and as approved by the Assembly in its resolution 34/117 of 14 December 1979, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were invited. The following were represented at the session:

(To be inserted)

C. Opening of the session and election of the President

(Agenda items 1 and 2)

19. The eighth session of the High-level Committee was opened by H.E. Mr. Eduard Kukan, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations and President of the seventh session of the High-level Committee.

20. H.E. Mr. Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations, was elected President of the High-level Committee by acclamation.

21. In his opening statement, the President noted that in an unfavourable global economic environment, the developing countries appeared especially vulnerable and would need to look again, with a heightened sense of commitment, at every possible opportunity for cooperation among themselves in the diverse areas of socio-economic activities.

D. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 4)

22. The High-level Committee adopted the agenda (TCDC/8/L.1) and the organization of work (TCDC/8/L.2). A general debate was held in the plenary meetings on 25, 26 and 27 May on items 5, 6, 7 and 8. The Working Group, which began its work on 27 May, was assigned agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8 for substantive discussion and recommendations in the Committee. For a list of documents considered by the Committee at its seventh session, see annex II.

E. Election of officers other than the President

(Agenda item 3)

23. The following officers were elected by acclamation:

Vice-Presidents: H.E. Mr. Aivars Baumanis (Latvia)

Mr. Saadat Husain (Bangladesh)

Rapporteur: Mr. Mahamane Maiga (Mali)

24. The Committee approved the President's recommendation that Mr. Husain should serve as Chairman of the Working Group. It was subsequently agreed that the Chairman should also serve as Rapporteur of the Working Group.

III. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION

(Agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8)

A. Statement by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

25. In his opening statement, the Associate Administrator mentioned that a significant number of different types of TCDC activities had been implemented in all the regions during the two-year reporting period. He commented briefly on some measures taken both in management and programme aspects to make the comparative advantage of TCDC sharper, and better known, and to make TCDC a more widely used form of cooperation.

26. The high priority attached to the acceleration of TCDC by developing countries had been manifested on the global scene by the new level of initiatives and decisions during 1991-1992. Two important examples are: (i) the heightened debate on TCDC and the increased attention, including the special place the Group of 15 (a group of non-aligned and other developing countries) is attaching to TCDC in its evolving programme; (ii) the very important decision of the Economic and Social Council (1992/41) calling on all partners in the development effort to give "first consideration to the use of TCDC".

27. Noting the implications of the strong Economic and Social Council exhortation, the Associate Administrator underscored that progress in using the modality in the implementation of national programmes and projects, whether financed from national treasuries or from external support, was slow.

28. The Associate Administrator highlighted measures taken during 1991-1992 in the United Nations system to enhance TCDC and build on the experience gained so far.

29. The Governing Council had approved a programme for the Special Unit for the 1992-1996 period that ensured that TCDC was an effective and central tool for the implementation of development activities. The programme also required the Special Unit to provide better analytical and intellectual support while activities such as sensitization and orientation were decentralized to TCDC national focal points and UNDP Field Offices with support by resource people made available through the Special Unit. UNDP had given TCDC a more consistent consideration as an alternative option with distinct advantages in programme, project formulation, and implementation. Significant progress had been achieved in that respect because of close monitoring by UNDP senior management.

30. In response to the Committee's request, new guidelines for monitoring progress in the promotion and application of TCDC throughout the United Nations system had been developed and adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The methodology for collecting data and information on progress and the updating of the TCDC-INRES database on capacities existing in developing countries had been simplified and an intensive updating effort of INRES, averaging about 20 countries a year, was currently under way.

31. Better awareness by all parties of the potential and the comparative advantage of TCDC, was key to popularizing TCDC, integrating it in national plans, and, as in the case of national execution, eventually to making it the norm rather than the exception. To that end, a very active public relations campaign had been undertaken in all the regions, including the newly independent States. Over 3,000 officials from all levels of responsibility and disciplines had participated in diverse activities organized with the support of the TCDC Special Unit. Cooperation South magazine, which had over 36,000 subscribers, had become a useful and popular medium for sharing experiences and information.

32. There was a much greater complementarity in effort and resources among the organizations of the United Nations and the Special Unit. In 1992, catalytic support of $1 million by the Unit to UNDP regional programmes had translated into the commitment of $34 million of regional programme funds for projects to be implemented through TCDC. During the same year, half of the resources

provided for activities jointly launched by the Special Unit and other organizations had been contributed by non-governmental organizations and United Nations organizations.

33. The Associate Administrator viewed the emergence of the newly independent countries participating in various activities as a new window for cooperation.

34. At the seventh session, the Administrator had recommended, and the Committee endorsed, the preparation of a framework or strategy for the decade to accelerate the use of TCDC in the implementation of development activities. Under the auspices of the Special Unit, extensive evaluations of the major categories of promotional activities and existing practices had been conducted in 1991 within UNDP. Many of the major agencies had also re-examined their policies and evaluated their programmes as a result of which there now existed a more favourable environment for utilizing that modality widely and consistently. There had also been extensive consultations with Governments and within the system to ensure that advantage was taken of the lessons learnt since Buenos Aires. The report on a strategy for the 1990s (document TCDC/8/4), was a distillation of those efforts. Nearly all the recommendations apply to both Governments and the United Nations system fulfilling a supportive role. The Associate Administrator noted that that was inevitable because TCDC was after all an effort of Governments with the United Nations system fulfilling a supportive role. He commended the report on the strategy as a basis for discussion and decisions.

35. The Associate Administrator concluded that the emphasis in the last decade and a half had justifiably been on advocacy, a role which should continue. The future must focus on the utilization of expertise, institutions and capacities of the South and that advantage must be taken of every opportunity to do so, whether at the national or intercountry level, with consistency and determination. The Associate Administrator urged that national policies reflect that orientation and that the basis for assessing progress in the implementation of BAPA should be, in the same spirit, the extent of which the expertise, institutions and capacities of the South were utilized widely.

B. Highlights of progress reports

36. The Administrator had submitted for consideration by the High-level Committee a series of reports on the progress achieved by Governments and organizations within and outside the United Nations development system in the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. Highlights of those reports, which served as the main focus of the Committee's debate and its eventual decisions, are set out below.

1. Action by Governments

37. Developing countries that provided information indicated that the TCDC exchanges/activities over time were significantly increasing. This was reflected in the number of experts and trainees exchanged, joint studies and technical or scientific workshops carried out, networking arrangements set up, and bilateral agreements concluded. For example, more than 5,300 trainees were

exchanged between developing countries, and more than 3,750 experts were also exchanged (information given by 42 countries) compared to some 700 experts reported (by 39 countries) during the previous reporting period (1988-1990). In addition, the eight developed countries that provided information (compared to three for the previous reporting period) recognized the importance of TCDC in international cooperation and some of them reported having already started to incorporate it in their development policy.

38. The quantity and quality of responses still need to be improved. The capacity for gathering and disseminating proper information on TCDC activities needs to be strengthened at the national level and in organizations.

39. Strengthening the national focal points mechanism for information emerges as one of the major recommendations of developing countries. The Special Unit for TCDC will continue its support to regional focal point meetings designed for exchange of experiences and to strengthen this mechanism.

40. The lack of financial support for TCDC activities is still identified as a major handicap in the promotion and use of the TCDC modality in development work. Greater efforts and willingness are needed to provide the main inputs required, including increased use of the Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs) increase in allocations from national treasures and flexibility by donors in the use of bilateral assistance to carry out activities implemented through TCDC.

41. In some instances, the meaning of TCDC and its features seems not to be fully understood. It is urged that decision 7/5 of the High-level Committee be applied and effective measures to accelerate the pace of the use of the TCDC modality in the execution of projects/programmes be adopted in each country.

2. Support by the United Nations development system

42. The information provided by the United Nations organizations shows clearly the increasingly high priority they attached to TCDC. Promotional and operational activities supported by or through the system are increasing, as indicated by the number and total cost of the umbrella and operational projects.

43. Nearly all responding organizations reported having adopted or being in the process of adopting policies to accelerate the use of the TCDC modality in the implementation or programmes and projects at the country, regional and interregional levels.

44. The major operational constraints of utilizing the TCDC modality appear to be the lack of funds for follow-up activities after catalytic assistance provided and the need for stronger commitment and effort to use/apply the modality.

45. As in previous reporting periods, it is still difficult to estimate the overall United Nations development system support in statistical and financial terms because, quite often, TCDC components are either part of large projects or applied as a modality for execution. The United Nations organizations are making efforts to give a minimum of standardized statistical data to be used for measuring progress.

46. Most of the organizations operate on a calendar-year basis, and do not have final data on a given year's activities until late March of the following year, which does not fit in with the timing of the High-level Committee's sessions, and required deadline for submitting the information for the preparation of the progress report. It is therefore suggested to review the timing for submitting the required information in the month of June.

47. The measures being taken to strengthen the substantive role of the Special Unit in identifying and disseminating information on successful experiences and innovative approaches and undertaking analytical work are to be expanded and given full support by all parties.

48. The trend towards much greater complementarity in efforts and resources between the various United Nations organizations is a welcome development since it ensures more substantive support to activities being undertaken.

49. A number of United Nations organizations reported TCDC activities integrating women and they also noted that the encouragement of the participation of women in all the activities financed to promote TCDC was one of their basic policies.

IV. SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

A. Overview

50. The Director of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries introduced items 5, 6 and 7, describing briefly the changes made and procedures followed in the preparation of the documents. With regard to the progress report in document TCDC/8/2, "Review of progress made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries", the Director of the Special Unit mentioned that the Administrator had taken account of the concerns expressed at the seventh session of the High-level Committee regarding the data and information provided in progress reports. The changes introduced including the integration of information into one single document, the newly revised questionnaires, and additional sections have resulted in significant improvement in quality of responses. The Director pointed out, however, that the collection of information continues to be, both at the national level and in the United Nations organizations, faced with constraints, especially with regard to the problem arising out of the current use of the calendar-year for reporting. Despite constraints, the information obtained and the synthesis before the Committee provided a more accurate indication of progress made than before.

51. The reports submitted by the Administrator in relation to decisions 7/1, 7/2, 7/8 and 7/9 present information on the actions taken and results in the implementation of these decisions.

52. The Director then briefly introduced document TCDC/8/4, the report on the development of a strategy for the promotion and the application of TCDC in technical cooperation programmes and activities of the United Nations development system in the 1990s which he described as a synthesis that had benefited from a wide range of contributions in addition to existing studies.

The report of the expert group which met at Rabat, Morocco, on the status of TCDC, evaluations undertaken in 1991 through the auspices of the Special Unit, meetings of national TCDC focal points held in all regions, the contributions from TCDC agency focal points and from SELA (Latin American Economic System) provided the salient and broadly applicable suggestions and recommendations in the report. The Director of the Special Unit underscored that the thrust of the recommendations was on giving pre-eminence to the application of the modality as a preferred option, the strengthening of national focal points, the articulation of policies conducive to TCDC, better information bases, decentralization of some functions to the national level. The recommendations allowed flexibility and accommodated needs particular to groupings and individual Governments. He concluded by pointing out that the extensive efforts and discussions in the preparation of the strategy had already served well in bringing issues to the forefront and resulting in heightened debates.

53. The general debate started with the statement of the Chairman of the Group of 77, who spoke on behalf of the Group. He noted that under the current circumstances, the advantages and relevance of TCDC to the developing world were even more significant than in the past. The achievement of the benefits of TCDC required joint efforts by all parties in the United Nations institutional framework. Developing countries had hastened their endeavour to put together the necessary inputs to strengthen their TCDC initiatives. In view of recognized limitations, developing countries had been improving the consistency of their national, subregional and regional policies to identify efficiently their own expertise and procurement possibilities for exchange among themselves. Among the key challenges was the need to strengthen national focal points, train public and private institutions, make compatible methodologies for TCDC formulation and evaluation, and overcome constraints in managerial infrastructure and expertise.

54. The Chairman of the Group of 77 added that a more difficult challenge was to link, in an effective way, South-South activities for technical and economic cooperation. To ensure that the objectives were going to be met, there was a need to examine the commitment to finance TCDC activities. It was hoped that the inclusion of TCDC as one of the main issues for UNDP Special Programme Resources would be a clear signal of the importance that donors should attach to that concrete aspect of the capacity-building efforts. Under those circumstances, it was especially important to ensure that the inclusion of the economies in transition in the UNDP activities would not imply further constraints to finance the initiatives of the developing world. The main advantage of the TCDC mechanism was to learn from experience in specific sectors how to become self-reliant. The Chairman noted, however, that the lower cost of TCDC could by no means be understood as a substitute for developing country conventional technical cooperation needs. Practice had proven that TCDC could be implemented only when comparative advantages in specific sectors were well established. In other cases, resources for traditional technical cooperation would still be needed if sustained development was to be achieved.

55. Most of the delegations indicated their support and sharing of the analysis and views of the Chairman of the Group of 77.

56. There was general agreement that, from the reports and information given by the Administrator of UNDP, a significant increase in TCDC activities within the

developing countries and within the United Nations system can be observed. This was felt as an encouraging sign although there is still a lot to be achieved and TCDC has not yet fully utilized its potential.

57. Many delegations recognized with satisfaction that, in keeping with the spirit and principles of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and in accordance with their individual capacities and requirements, the developing countries had actively carried out various kinds of cooperation in many fields on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and stress on the practical results. The progress made was reflected in the increase of the number of experts and trainees exchanged, joint studies and technical or scientific workshops carried out, networking arrangements set up, and bilateral agreements concluded.

58. Several delegations agreed with the general assessment presented in the report of the review of progress made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (document TCDC/8/2) which identified the need for, inter alia, a clear national policy on TCDC, the strengthening of national focal points and the need for adequate financial support both nationally and from international bilateral and multilateral sources. While recognizing that the main responsibility for implementing TCDC lay with the developing countries, numerous delegations pointed out the financial constraints of the developing countries and noted that TCDC activities deserved full support from the developed countries and international financial institutions.

59. Several delegations recognized also the importance of encouraging the involvement of the private sector in TCDC activities and agreed that there was also a need to improve communication and to promote and strengthen coordination between the focal points at the national level as well as to increase the flow of relevant information on the needs and capacities among the developing countries.

60. Delegations from developed countries recalled that the primary responsibility for TCDC lay with the developing countries themselves and that that had already been recognized in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. They noted that there were certain limited to the actions that the international community could take in respect of TCDC. Recognizing, however, that to play their role, the developing countries needed some external support, those delegations mentioned that their countries strongly supported efforts of the multilateral system to promote and facilitate TCDC. That modality was hence recognized rightly as one of the six priority areas for the fifth UNDP programming cycle.

61. Some delegations from developed countries continued to question the need for the High-level Committee and reiterated the view that the TCDC issues should be discussed by the UNDP Governing Council, following preparatory work at the expert level.

62. Some delegations from developing countries expressed their concern about the lack of adequate appreciation by developing countries themselves of the benefits of TCDC and pointed out that fact as the most crucial aspect that impeded the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

63. A number of delegations underlined the need to highlight the integration of women in TCDC activities as a high priority. They pointed out the importance of

women, both as beneficiaries and as equal partners in the development process, since women represented a large, dynamic, yet untapped human resource.

64. Numerous delegations reaffirmed also their belief that developing countries should concentrate more on environmental activities in their TCDC programmes. One representative mentioned that his country had paid a very high price in the past, both in terms of lost lives and property damage, due to a flash flood that had been triggered by inadequate environmental protection. The role of regional integration schemes in promoting TCDC was highlighted in several statements.

65. Some delegations recalled the plight of the least developed countries and how those countries were increasingly being marginalized from the global economic mainstream. The delegations urged, therefore, that due priority be accorded to the needs of the least developed countries in the field of TCDC.

66. Considering that TCDC was clearly a developing-countries undertaking, for which national resources had to be allocated, several delegations urged that more attention be given to the establishment of IPF umbrella projects to facilitate TCDC at the national level, for which UNDP field offices and UNDP regional bureaux could helpfully complement the resources and efforts of national authorities.

67. Given the scarcity of funds and the increase in developing countries needs, one representative noted that more was required from developed countries through "triangular cooperation" for follow-up funding for activities generated through catalytic support from the United Nations development system.

68. Several delegations noted the vital role that the decentralized TCDC-INRES database continued to play in the development and dissemination of information on capacities and needs in developing countries and called for the continued improvement of the system.

69. Some delegations called for much greater increase in procurement by the United Nations system from developing countries, of equipment, supplies and advisory services, and noted that that could strengthen the capacities of developing countries, which in turn would enhance their ability to engage in wider cooperation among themselves. One delegation stressed that the procedure, rules and regulations, especially those of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO), would need to be, to that extent, made flexible.

70. A number of delegations highlighted the role of the Special Unit for TCDC and called for the strengthening of the Special Unit to allow it to play its due role in the 1990s. One delegation mentioned for the Special Unit the role of a "broker" facilitating contacts with experts and institutions, identifying funding sources and backstopping TCDC.

71. A representative outlined that his country, which had just come out of a centralized economic system, was in the first stage in participating in TCDC activities and that his country was therefore expecting support to establish its focal point in the most appropriate manner and to benefit from the experiences of other developing countries.

72. Emphasizing TCDC as one area which could yield rich dividends, as a vital component of South-South cooperation and as a valuable means of stimulating cooperation and integration among countries, most of the delegations reaffirmed their commitment to continue to support the expansion of TCDC modalities and to participate actively in its effective implementation.

73. There was agreement that exchanging experiences and information among developing countries and taking advantage of complementarities to upgrade the level of skills through TCDC was highly cost-effective. TCDC was seen as a form of cooperation which had enormous potential that developing countries were yet to tap and in the view of one representative the technological advance in the industrialized countries and the unavailability of new technologies to the developing countries, except at great expense or with unacceptable restrictions, only served to widen the gap and heighten the need for developing countries' collaboration in technical fields.

B. Action by Governments

74. There was general agreement that the information given in the report of the Administrator on progress made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (document TCDC/8/2) showed a significant increase in TCDC activities within the developing countries. All the delegations who made statements, including those of countries that had earlier provided information for the report, supplied detailed updated or additional data on their TCDC activities. The delegations reaffirmed their continuing support to the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

75. A number of delegations reported having established international cooperation agencies to address technical cooperation, especially TCDC activities, in a more efficient and effective manner. Some delegations noted that their agencies were focusing on training programmes and exchange of experts in different fields.

76. Several delegations indicated important increases in the financial allocations to TCDC activities, from national resources. One delegation reported an allocation of over $13 million to provide developing countries with equipment, projects assistance and disaster relief assistance. The same delegation reported, as a new effort in TCDC, its programme to enhance ties in economic, social and cultural fields by sending youth volunteers to developing countries.

77. Numerous delegations noted having formulated, at a macro-level, their policies for TCDC and were in the process of, or had already completed, carrying out an overall investigation and collecting data on their capacities and requirements in different sectors.

78. A number of delegations stated the high level of experience they had acquired in different sectors and fields such as agriculture, water, public health, rural development and credit, population, family planning, etc. Those delegations reported that they were willing to share, or were already sharing, their experience and expertise with other developing countries. Some delegations mentioned providing training facilities in their national institutes

to other developing countries and having organized (or planning to organize) TCDC programming exercises in their fields of expertise.

79. Several delegations reported having conducted (or intending to conduct) expert group meetings. One delegation mentioned that its country would conduct in 1993 an expert group meeting on development schemes that had been proven successful in generating self-reliance and sustainable development.

80. Statements by a number of delegations indicated that regional groupings or mechanisms could play an important role in promoting and implementing TCDC activities. Successful examples were mentioned regarding the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Latin American Economic System (SELA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The delegations stated that a number of beneficial programmes had been implemented, within the framework of those regional groups, in different fields such as rural development, agricultural information, management training, communications, meteorology, poverty alleviation and trade promotion.

81. A number of delegations reported having been particularly active in networking and twinning activities for the promotion of TCDC on a long-term and sustainable basis and having established bilateral arrangements in different fields in several developing countries.

82. One representative stated that it was the first time that his country was participating in a TCDC meeting. He expressed the high interest of his country in participating in the very near future in efficient and effective implementation of TCDC activities with other developing countries.

83. Several delegations indicated taking important measures to strengthen their national focal points and to increase the number and quality of bilateral agreements. Some delegations mentioned that, parallel to traditional technical cooperation activities, their specialized ministries (science and technology, environment) and their academic and research communities had strengthened their scientific and technological links with other developing countries through bilateral arrangements or through regional intergovernmental organizations. One representative stressed the ability of his country's agency for cooperation in pooling internal resources and in convincing national institutions that the implementation of well-designed and relevant cooperation projects not only had general political and economical importance, but also represented the means to attain their particular interest.

84. One delegation, speaking on behalf of a group of developed countries, stated that the member States of that group had sought actively to support the TCDC process by backing programmes for information, training and technical assistance among developing countries. He indicated that those States had also supported South-South cooperation by alleviating the food shortage in one country through trilateral transactions with neighbouring countries and through balance-of-payment support earmarked for the purchase of goods from other developing countries.

C. Support to technical cooperation among developing countries by the United Nations development system

85. Referring to the Administrator's report on the progress made by the United Nations development system in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, several delegations outlined that there had been a continuous increase in the promotional and operational TCDC activities supported by the United Nations system. The delegations expressed, therefore, their appreciation for the assistance provided in the TCDC context by the organizations in the United Nations development system and other external support agencies. Particular appreciation was directed to the UNDP Special Unit for its valuable assistance in expanding TCDC activities. In that context, several delegations urged the strengthening of the Special Unit to allow it to play its due role in the 1990s.

86. A number of delegations noted, however, that, in order to further promote TCDC and make the approach effective, more efforts should be made by the relevant organizations of the United Nations development system and the multilateral financial institutions to play a catalytic role. One representative mentioned that in carrying out their TCDC programmes, most of the developing countries were faced with resources constraints, unavailability of specific expertise or lack of certain facilities; in that regard United Nations agencies and multilateral institutions should complement and fill the gaps by providing adequate support and assistance to ensure the success of the TCDC programmes.

87. In calling for more support from the United Nations development system, one representative noted that the organizations of the United Nations system and the international institutions had a global reach and wide access to information on the comparative strength and the abilities of developing countries. He added that that information could be collated and organized, identifying the specific areas of expertise and excellence that States could offer for potential sharing with others. The representative proposed that, through that process, a central clearing centre of an information network could be established and made available for access to Governments, international organizations and agencies.

88. Another representative noted that by stimulating South-East technical cooperation, UNDP might serve the development needs of both groups of countries. He added that further reflection on the means for forging the links of South-East technical cooperation might highlight the need for creating funds as well as mechanisms for exchanges of information, know-how and expertise between interested parties. The representative noted, with satisfaction, that UNDP and the Special Unit for TCDC were contributing to that end by publishing national compendia of training programmes and expertise capacities of institutions registered in the TCDC-INRES database.

89. Several delegations that took the floor stated a number of examples of support to their TCDC activities by the United Nations development system. The information given was reinforced or complemented by organizations of the United Nations system and other external support agencies.

90. The representative of an intergovernmental organization stressed the need for closer contact between intergovernmental organizations and TCDC national focal points. He mentioned that his organization was ready to finance

international travel for least developed countries to participate in the training programmes offered in his organization's region.

91. Some delegations noted that more attention should be given to the establishment of more umbrella projects and that there was a need for greater complementarity and triangular operations to promote catalytic funding.

92. Different representatives of United Nations organizations called for greater collaboration among the United Nations development system to develop concrete modalities of interaction among the agencies and for greater sharing of information. One representative pointed out that the Group of Experts' definition of TCDC was too restrictive. The same representative noted that the Special Unit for TCDC had an important role to play in promoting a dialogue among the international community and developing a new strategy based on evaluation of needs.

93. A representative of a United Nations agency stated that his organization had initiated steps to computerize recording of allocations and expenditures for TCDC components in projects.

94. One representative mentioned that the Special Unit for TCDC should continuously investigate and collect capacities and needs of developing countries, establish complete TCDC-INRES and disseminate the information on a timely basis, playing, therefore, the role of matching the needs and capacities.

95. Another representative noted that the Special Unit for TCDC had concentrated its efforts in promotional activities and that its most successful programme was the intergovernmental programming exercise for TCDC. He added that that programme was still promotional in its character although it had the flexibility that enabled institutions and Governments to identify convergence of interests in various fields. The representative noted that the actual implementation of projects was not faster due to the lack of adequate financing. He stated that in his view the programme should be improved and that the promotional activities (sensitization, studies, etc.) should be oriented towards more operational services.

96. In noting the constructive role played by the various United Nations organizations and agencies and the large number of development activities in the field of TCDC, one delegation noted that the willingness of those organizations and agencies to use the TCDC modality in the design and execution of the programmes would have a far-reaching impact on the future course of TCDC. The same delegation also expressed its feeling that the Special Unit for TCDC should initiate programmes to support regional groups and promote interaction amongst them for enhancing TCDC activities.

97. One delegation mentioned that the role of the United Nations development system in promoting TCDC was as important as the activities of the developing countries themselves, and noted that the special efforts put forth by UNDP regional bureaux were noteworthy. The delegation stated that basic minimum funds required for follow-up activities could be arranged by the regional bureaux, and that TCDC activities within the fifth cycle programmes/projects must be clearly defined and outlined at the beginning of the programming exercise.

98. Recognizing that the primary responsibility for ensuring the success in the wide use of the TCDC modality rested with the developing countries themselves, a number of delegations noted that the United Nations system could assist with a strengthened supportive role, especially with the critical inputs of advice and financial support.

99. There was general agreement that the United Nations development system should extend its support to TCDC commensurate with the high priority that the international community and the United Nations organizations themselves attached to that question.

100. One delegation pointed out that the Buenos Aires Plan of Action called for the provision of resources from UNDP to be allocated to developing countries for strengthening TCDC. The delegation expressed its appreciation for the efforts thus far in that regard and requested that the process be further strengthened. The delegation highlighted the efforts of the Special Unit for TCDC which, in the delegation's view, had done creditable work over the years, despite the limited resources at its disposal, but which still had a long way to go before it could claim to have completely discharged its responsibilities under the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

101. Several delegations noted that procurement and use of experts from developing countries were still quite low. One delegation stated that IAPSO seemed to be the ideal mechanism to implement fully recommendation 31 of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The same delegation pointed out that the developing countries had almost no access to that Office and that UNDP could be of great support because it had all the information on developing countries' top institutions that could be used by IAPSO.

D. Overall framework for the promotion and application of technical cooperation among developing countries in the 1990s

102. Regarding the strategy, the delegations commended document TCDC/8/4, "Report on development of a strategy of TCDC in the United Nations development system", and emphasized some elements for special attention. The main elements of the strategy as identified in the report were widely welcomed by the representatives. The points highlighted and suggestions offered by various delegations are summarized below.

103. A large number of delegations agreed that potentials for TCDC had not been adequately realized. The benefits of TCDC, especially its cost-effectiveness and appropriateness, needed to be appreciated better. Familiarity with the modality as well as with the various types of activities should also be increased by stepping up training and orientation programmes. It was intensified efforts by the developing countries themselves that could effectively enhance the application of TCDC. Many delegations placed emphasis on adoption of a national policy specifically in respect of TCDC by individual developing countries giving priority consideration to TCDC in programme implementation and setting up institutional mechanisms for that purpose. However, one delegation pointed out that giving priority to TCDC was not a

problem and the country concerned had been promoting TCDC in a significant manner over many years.

104. It was suggested that vigorous efforts should be made to circulate widely information on the needs and capacities of developing countries. In that effort the United Nations development system was considered to be in a position to play a strong supportive role and the new thrust in preparation of capacity compendia was welcomed. The importance of an information network was emphasized and efforts being made by United Nations agencies and intergovernmental groups (Group of 15) to establish and operate a database were noted. Need for improvement in the quality and coverage of the database and for strengthening the linkage between networks was also pointed out.

105. The idea of strengthening centres of excellence in developing countries for delivery of TCDC received strong support. Some delegations highlighted the importance of student exchange as a useful way of promoting TCDC on a sustainable basis.

106. Almost every delegation that took the floor urged the strengthening of national TCDC focal points and emphasized the usefulness of institutional links between national and regional focal points as well as focal points of the United Nations development system. They also identified this activity for support by donor agencies and countries. A suggestion to set up national commissions to promote and guide TCDC in all development activities was put forward. Such commissions could also strengthen the national focal points.

107. Some delegations while detailing national TCDC initiatives and activities in bilateral cooperation programmes felt that pooling of resources available for TCDC from all sources could go a long way in expanding overall TCDC. The possibility of establishing an interregional fund to finance TCDC foreign exchange components was also mentioned. Many delegations spoke of the expansion of the trilateral TCDC operation. Under that mechanism developing countries could undertake TCDC activities with financial assistance provided by bilateral as well as multilateral donor countries and agencies by using technical resources from other developing countries. Some delegations felt that international financial institutions should focus specific attention on promotion of TCDC.

108. A great deal of weight was placed by some delegations on networking and twinning for the promotion of TCDC on a long-term and sustainable basis. It was considered that progress in national execution of technical cooperation programmes under the United Nations development system should facilitate the accelerated use of the TCDC modality by developing countries.

109. Representatives maintained that adoption of explicit national TCDC policy, holding of workshops on successful TCDC experiences, greater use of TCDC umbrella projects, programming exercises for matching needs and capacities, or joint consideration of common problems, had proved useful in promoting TCDC. But it was pointed out that effective follow-up action and provision of follow-up financing were crucial for expanded use of TCDC. One representative suggested that various elements of the TCDC strategy should be subjected to periodic scrutiny by working groups and progress reports on performance should be submitted for consideration of the High-level Committee.

E. Comments by the Director of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries following the general debate

110. The Director of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, in commenting on some of the issues raised during the plenary debates, expressed gratitude and acknowledged the positive assessment on behalf of the many who had contributed towards the preparation of the reports and the overall framework for the enhancement of TCDC in the 1990s. The credit for the wide support and positive observations by the distinguished representatives largely went to the many experts, national TCDC focal points, and the United Nations organizations. The Director also acknowledged the similar support to and comments on the work of the Special Unit, whose modest supportive role had been accorded significance and importance.

111. He noted that no specific questions had been directed to the secretariat by the distinguished representatives in their statements which had reaffirmed or added to the proposals and recommendations highlighted as main thoughts and major elements considered conducive to accelerating the use of TCDC. He assured the meeting that full account would be taken of the additional inputs and attention of the relevant parties would be drawn in follow-up actions and the dissemination of the report of the eighth session of the Committee. The Director of the Special Unit for TCDC indicated that many types of activities suggested were being undertaken or would be looked into under existing arrangements for considering new activities. He concluded with comments on some general issues raised providing clarifications, in particular some issues in relation to the definition of TCDC, the role and functions of the Special Unit, the TCDC-INRES database, and the thrust of the strategy proposed.

V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

A. Report of the Chairman of the Working Group to the High-level Committee

112. At its ___ meeting, on 4 June 1993, the Committee considered the report of the Chairman of the Working Group to the High-level Committee. The report of the Working Group recommended the adoption of three draft decisions, including the draft provisional agenda for the ninth session. The three decisions were adopted at the meeting. The texts of the decisions are reproduced in annex I (decisions 8/1, 8/2 and 8/3).

B. Views expressed following the adoption of the decisions

(To be inserted)

C. Schedule and organization of work of the ninth session of the High-level Committee

The Committee adopted the draft provisional agenda for its ninth session (document TCDC/8/L.4). The provisional agenda is contained in decision 8/3.

D. Draft report of the High-level Committee

The Committee authorized its Rapporteur to complete its report, taking into account any amendments or comments received from delegations.

IV. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

A. Closing statement by the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

(To be inserted)

B. Closing statement by the President

(To be inserted)

Notes

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, Buenos Aires, 30 August-12 September 1978 (United Nations publications, Sales No. E.78.II.A.11 and corrigendum), chap. I.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/35/39 and Corr.1).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/36/39).

4/ Ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/38/39).

5/ Ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/40/39).

6/ Ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/42/39).

7/ Ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/44/39).

8/ Ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/46/39).

ANNEX I

Decisions adopted by the High-level Committee at its eighth session

[To be inserted]

ANNEX II

List of documents before the High-level Committee at its eighth session

TCDC/8/L.1	Provisional and annotated agenda, including list of documents
TCDC/8/L.2	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
TCDC/8/1	Status of pre-session documents
TCDC/8/2 and Add.1	Review of progress made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
TCDC/8/3	Reports by the Administrator of UNDP on:
	(a) International Consultative Meeting on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries;
	(b) The extent to which recommendations of the South Commission report pertaining to technical cooperation among developing countries can be implemented;
	(c) Progress of the implementation of the High-level Committee decision to convene a special meeting of the United Nations development system focal points for the preparation of guidelines for the review of policies and procedures in those organizations of United Nations development system concerning TCDC;
	(d) Intergovernmental programming exercises on technical cooperation among developing countries
TCDC/8/4	Report on the development of a strategy for the promotion and the application of technical cooperation among developing countries in technical cooperation programmes and activities of the United Nations development system in the 1990s
TCDC/8/5	Measures to facilitate TCDC - Staffing of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries

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